

KANEGASAKI SISTER CITY COMMITTEE

Fiscal Year 2007

Members: Byron Koh (Chair), Nancy Bess, Denise Boyd, Carolyn Platt, Stephanie Joyce, Helen MacMellon, Yuko Takahashi

Staff Liaison: Nancy Pagano

Retirements: Florence Boynton, Alex Kent

Resignations: Eric Nakajima

Former Mayor Norio Takahashi and the Nitobe Foundation Visit Amherst

On Tuesday, September 19th, 2006, eight members of the Nitobe Foundation (a society designed to celebrate the work of the scholar Inazo Nitobe), Mr. and Mrs. Norio Takahashi, and a travel agent from Kanegasaki, arrived in Amherst just after lunch for a whirlwind one-day tour of Amherst environs which included visits to UMass, Amherst College, The Jones Library, and the grave of William Smith Clark. A reception upon arrival took place in the Town Room of Town Hall, with greetings by new Amherst Town Manager Larry Shaffer, Select Board Chair Anne Awad, and Nancy Pagano, representing the Kanegasaki Sister City Committee. Highlight of the day was a formal dinner (coordinated by Nancy Pagano) at the University of Massachusetts' University Club (aka Faculty Club), with a beer/wine reception prior to dinner sponsored by the Five College Center for East Asian Studies and its director, Kathleen Woods Masalski. To greet our Japanese visitors, area invitees included former Town Manager Barry Del Castillo and his wife Laurie Benoit, Town Manager Larry and his wife Sally Shaffer, Select Board member Hwei-Ling Greeney, former Select Board member Carl Seppala and his wife Karen Stevens, Kathy Woods Masalski and her husband Bill, former Amherst Superintendent of Schools Gus Sayer, Library Director Bonnie Isman, and nine KSCC members and their spouses/significant others.

Yuko Takahashi and Alex Kent served as interpreters throughout the day. Former Mayor Takahashi and his contingent stayed at the Campus Center Hotel and left Amherst the next morning. Funding to treat our Japanese guests and our interpreters was provided by Larry Shaffer, Anne Awad, and the Five College Center for East Asian Studies. Transportation to and from the hotel to the reception and for the Amherst College tour was provided in the Amherst Senior Center's van by Sgt. Mike Sullivan of the Amherst Police Department. A great time was had by all.

March Visit of Kanegasaki Middle School Students

The 2007 Kanegasaki Middle School visit was another successful event. Fifteen students and three chaperones arrived Wednesday, March 21st, at the Amherst Town Hall, where eager families greeted them. Kanegasaki Committee members Nancy Pagano and Florence Boynton organized the welcome party, while Byron Koh, KSCC Chair, made official welcoming remarks. Denise Boyd, who is a committee member as well as the coordinator for the exchange for the Amherst Middle School, introduced the Japanese students to their host families. Once students and families left for their homes, the chaperones were taken to dinner by Denise Boyd and Irene LaRoche, social studies teacher at ARMS.

On the first full day of the Amherst stay (Thursday, March 22), the chaperones were picked up at the Lord Jeffery Inn by Yuko Takahashi and brought to the Middle School. Japanese students and chaperones then were bussed to UMass, where they were treated to snacks at the University of Massachusetts Worcester Dining Commons and a campus tour. Next, the group visited The

Jones Library, the Amherst History Museum and the downtown shops, with Yuko and Nancy Bess. After this, the group returned to the Middle School. Denise introduced the chaperones to Dr. Jere Hochman, Superintendent of Schools, and then joined the students for lunch, a tour of the school and class time. KSCC students spent the later afternoon and evening with their host families, while chaperones were treated to a lovely dinner at the home of KSCC Chair Byron Koh and his wife, Fran Wall. KSCC members contributed to this sumptuous pot luck, and a great time was had by all.

Early Friday, Denise picked the chaperones up at the Lord Jeff and brought them to the Middle School, where they joined the host students and visiting students for a class, and then the visiting students and chaperones were brought on a field trip to Old Deerfield and the Butterfly Museum. That evening, while the Japanese students were entertained by the host families, KSCC members took the chaperones out to dinner at Bertucci's.

The last day of the visit, Saturday, included shopping time and lunch in Northampton for the chaperones with ARMS teacher, Alfie Aschuler, prior to a rendezvous at the Northampton Bowling Alley for a bowling party with the Japanese students and American host students and their families. That evening, a lovely potluck farewell dinner was held at the Amherst Regional High School with KSCC members, host families and all students and chaperones.

Grant Writing Work

Over the summer, Nancy Bess, Kathy Masalski, Denise Boyd and Byron Koh met to discuss grant possibilities, to find a way to fund Amherst students for a trip to Kanegasaki. One such grant possibility was through the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnerships and involved environmental education for Amherst students who would research such matters as water conservation or recycling both in Amherst and Kanegasaki. Through the fall and winter, the grant writing group (Nancy Bess, Yuko Takahashi, Helen MacMellon, Denise Boyd, and Byron Koh) continued its work and the grant application for \$26,000 was almost entirely written by March. Unfortunately in April, Kathy Woods Masalski received information from the Japan Foundation Center that it is not accepting any grant requests at this time.

Looking Ahead

In FY 08, the KSCC will continue to focus on assisting school and Amherst Town officials when Kanegasaki contingents visit Amherst. We are committed to supporting the important work of promoting peace and understanding between different cultures.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Hirsh Pagano, Secretary/Staff Liaison